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well as book-reading, were widely diffused among us. Take our word for it, there is no better company than good books; you may choose from among them companions for all hours, and for all moods of the mind. Ask them questions, and they will be sure at all times to give you at least a civil answer. They are finger-posts to the travelling man, and travel through all regions to him who never moves from the chimney corner. They are implements of trade to the professional man, and a profession itself to him that has none. They are music to the melancholy, and as a dance to the merry; as salt are they to the solid, and to the solid as salt. They are as a new world to him that has exhausted the old, for "of making many books," as the preacher saith, "there is no end." But we must come to an end ourselves. We would, in short, advocate the claims of literature in general, and its high title to consideration, as it commends itself to all men in common; and we plead guilty to the ambition of adding to the numerous honourable characteristics of our countrymen, that of being in an eminent degree a reading people. Irishmen ought to remember that their country was famous in ancient days for its learning, and cherish an honest ambition in modern times to retrieve its character. As one means of forwarding this object, we would seek to diffuse among them a reading habit, and give our best encouragement to whatever instrumentalities might tend to increase libraries, and make reading easy to all classes. Cheap literature is a luxury of sterling value; but until people have acquired a taste for it, they will hold it cheap enough. Never do we pass a book-shop, or an humble bookseller's stall, without a feeling of reverence for the profession. There, say we, is a dispensary of ideal aliment indispensable to our mental existence, and, if properly used, yielding nothing but health, prosperity, and enjoyment to the soul. If our countrymen read, they will become informed—learned; and if they read good books, they must not only become informed and learned, but wise. The vivacity of their conversation will then be enriched with all the streams both of useful and entertaining knowledge. Reading will be a delightful resource to the working man, and no bad employment at least to the idle. Poverty will have its compensations. There will be another distinction set up in society besides that of having, or not having, mere worldly professions. The dignity of mind will be asserted. Mind with its congenial influences must act upon manners; and if, as the inscription upon the old gate at Oxford beareth record, "manours maketh ye man," our country will be once more exalted among the nations. X. D.

### SANTA CROCE.

BY J. U. U.

I stood and saw the pictured gloom unfold  
 Grey Santa Croce, crossed by dusky rays  
 That dimmed its columned aisle : as from of old  
 Its ancient air lay slumbering o'er the cold  
 Dark dwellers underneath. When to my gaze,  
 Shade-like, 'mid that grey gloom of distant days,  
 She stood, whom Petrarch looked on there and caught  
 That love too strong for death ! A tender gleam  
 Like moonlight fell around her, baffling thought ;  
 Strange ! 'twas remembrance thither stole, and brought  
 That smile of sweetness from my breast's deep stream  
 More strong than fancy, and transformed the dream  
 To thee—from her, whom a less hallowed fire  
 Hath made immortal with the love-devoted lyre.

**SENSIBLE ADVICE.**—Avoid condolence with those who are mourning the loss of friends. Condolences, as well as mournings, are bad things. Men, and more especially women, give actual increase to their grief while, under the notion of duty, and even of merit, they make display of it. If mournings were altogether out of use, a vast mass of suffering would be prevented from coming into existence. Some savage or barbarous nations make merry at funerals: they are wiser, in this respect, than polished ones.—*Bowring's Deontology.*

When a native of Java has a child born, he immediately plants a cocoa-tree, which, adding a circle every year to its bark, indicates the age of the tree, and therefore the age of the child. The child, in consequence, regards the tree with affection all the rest of its life.—*Buck's Harmonies, &c., of Nature.*

### THE THUGS.

THE Thugs were known in the time of the Emperor Akbar of Delhi, by whom many were executed. They were first known to the British government in 1812, and then many were hanged in Bundelkond. Again, in 1817, they attracted notice by their horrible acts, and twelve villages in Bundelkond, which were peopled almost entirely by them, were taken by a force sent against them. They were then dispersed, but assembled in various parts in Sindhia's and the Nagpoor country, also in Holkar's dominions. From 1817 till 1831 they were not molested, and, in consequence, increased greatly in the latter year. Measures were taken to suppress them, which have been attended with great success. One hundred and eleven were executed at Jubbulpoor, and upwards of four hundred transported for life to the eastern settlement of Pinang.

The Thugs form a perfectly distinct class of persons, who subsist almost entirely upon the produce of the murders they are in the habit of committing. They appear to have derived their denomination from the practice usually adopted by them of decoying the persons they fix upon to destroy, to join their party; and then, taking advantage of the confidence they endeavour to inspire, to strangle their unsuspecting victims. There are several peculiarities in the habits of the Thugs, in their mode of causing death, and in the precautions they adopt for the prevention of discovery, that distinguish them from every other class of delinquents; and it may be considered a general rule whereby to judge of them, that they affect to disclaim the practice of petty theft, housebreaking, and indeed every species of stealing that has not been preceded by the perpetration of murder.

The Thugs adopt no other method of killing but strangulation, and the implement made use of for this purpose is a handkerchief, or any other convenient strip of cloth. The manner in which the deed is done will be described hereafter. They never attempt to rob a traveller until they have in the first instance deprived him of life; after the commission of a murder, they invariably bury the body immediately, if time and opportunity serve, or otherwise conceal it; and never leave a corpse uninterred in the highway, unless they happen to be disturbed.

To trace the origin of this practice would now be a matter of some difficulty, for if the assertions of the Thugs themselves are entitled to any credit, it has been in vogue from time immemorial; and they pretend that its institution is coeval with the creation of the world. Like most other inhuman practices, the traditions regarding it are mixed up with tales of Hindoo superstition; and the Thugs would wish to make it appear, that, in immolating the numberless victims that yearly fall by their hands, they are only obeying the injunctions of the deity of their worship, to whom they say they are offering an acceptable sacrifice.

A very considerable number of the Thugs are Mussulmans. No judgment of the birth or caste of a Thug can, however, be formed from his name; for it not unfrequently happens that a Hindoo Thug has a Mussulman name with a Hindoo *alias* attached, and *vice versa* with respect to the Thugs who are by birth Mahomedans. In almost every instance the Thugs have more than one appellation by which they are known. They usually move in large parties, often amounting to one hundred or two hundred persons, and resort to all sort of subterfuges for the purpose of concealing their real profession. If they are travelling southward, they represent themselves to be either proceeding in quest of service, or on their way to rejoin the regiments they belong to in this part of the country. When, on the contrary, their route lies towards the north, they represent themselves to be sepoy from corps of the Bombay or Nizam's army, who are going on leave to Hindustan. The gangs do not always consist of persons who are Thugs by birth. It is customary for them to entice, by the promise of monthly pay or the hopes of amassing money that are held out, many persons who are ignorant of the deeds of death that are to be perpetrated for the attainment of these objects, until made aware of the reality by seeing the victims of their cupidity fall under the hands of the stranglers; and the Thugs declare that novices have occasionally been so horrified at the sight as to have effected their immediate escape.

Many of the most notorious Thugs are the adopted children of others of the same class. They make it a rule, when a murder is committed, never to spare the life of any one,